



## Membership Policy (Including All Categories of Associate Members)

### 1. Introduction

Churches Together in Milton Keynes Trust (CTMKT) is an ecumenical charity with the purpose of supporting ecumenical activity in and around Milton Keynes. The trustees are the legal “members” of the charity and have responsibility for governance.

It is possible for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) like CTMKT to “create associate or other classes of non-voting membership, and may determine the rights and obligations of any such members (including payment of membership fees), and the conditions for admission to, and termination of membership of any such class of members.” (Governing Document Clause 17.1)

Churches Together in Milton Keynes (CTMK) was created by CTMKT as a broad-based diverse network of churches with the dual aims of mutual support and unity in mission. The “members” of CTMK are the congregations who choose to belong to this body.

As trustees, we want to emphasise the gifts that member congregations contribute as Christian communities - in terms of their own unique membership, heritage and vocation. We therefore encourage congregations to view CTMK as a means of serving God and answering the call of Christ.

We need to raise funds from member churches, but CTMK is not a “service provider” with a membership fee, so we will avoid language that gives this impression.

We will aim to value all forms of Christian community and celebrate their unique contributions. This applies particularly to smaller congregations who may not see themselves as valuable. We want to celebrate what God is doing in and through them. We believe that it is important for well-resourced congregations to support less wealthy congregations in terms of any financial contributions needed.

We recognise that this will require discussions and conversations with potential member churches and may take more time, but we believe that this is the right way to build the network. We will need to do this work slowly and steadily.

Membership should be built on genuine relationships, rather than lists, statements or declarations. We believe that it is important to have ongoing personal links between trustees and the leaders of member congregations.

Membership is a problematic issue, since denominations have a range of different ecclesiologies and concepts of belonging. Some denominations have creeds or statements of faith, while others are inherently opposed to creedal statements. Some congregations would also find the Five Marks of Mission difficult, because of the reference to sacraments.

This policy sets out the terms and conditions of non-voting associate members of CTMKT, including the membership of CTMK itself.

## 2. CTE Statement of Belief

Churches Together in England uses the following Statement of Belief:

**Churches Together in England unites in pilgrimage those Churches in England which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves:**

- **to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and**
- **to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world**

**to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

## 3. CTMK Membership Covenant

Churches Together in Milton Keynes uses the following membership covenant:

**As a member of Churches Together in Milton Keynes, we will work with other Christian congregations in this area to:**

- **Show God's love to the Borough and City of Milton Keynes**
- **Support each other as followers of Christ**

## 4. Members

In order to achieve these aims, we will observe the following policies:

- a. We will have a written "Membership Covenant" that sets out the basic commitment made by member congregations.
- b. Member congregations will need to be members of CTE, or could qualify as members of CTE.
- c. Exception is made for any Church or Association of Churches which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith or covenant, provided that it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and it is committed to the aims and purposes of Churches Together in England and that it will work in the spirit of the Basis. The Religious Society of Friends is a member of CTE under a similar clause.
- d. We will aim for a trustee to meet the appropriate congregational decision-making body before the covenant is signed. This could be a leadership group, a ministry team, charity trustees, a council or a congregational meeting.
- e. Some congregations will join as part of a group, eg, a circuit, cluster, or ecumenical partnership. In these instances the discussion will be held with the decision-making body for the group as a whole.

- f. The covenant will include a financial commitment that will be agreed with the member congregation(s) in question. We will aim to be both flexible and informative in our discussions. In other words, we will let members know how much money is needed to fund our work together, but recognise that congregations have local pressures which can make giving difficult.
- g. Member congregations will ensure that they have a named person, who will act as the contract person for Churches Together.
- h. Churches Together in Milton Keynes will assign a trustee as the contact person for each member congregation or group. No trustee will be responsible for more than ten congregations or groups.
- i. The decision to admit a congregation or network as a member of CTMKT will be made by the trustees of CTMKT by a 75% majority vote.
- j. Member churches will be listed on our website and invited to member-only meetings which focus on strategic issues. There may be other benefits and obligations for members as things develop.
- k. There will be a review date for each membership covenant. The covenant could be agreed for a number of years. A new covenant will need to be negotiated at this point.
- l. The trustees of CTMKT have the power to remove congregations from membership if concerns are raised about the conduct of congregations or leaders.

## 5. Charities and Networks in Association

CTMKT will maintain a list of “Charities and Networks in Association”. These are organisations which fulfil one or more of the Five Marks of Mission.

In order to be listed as one of the Charities and Networks in Association the charity must indicate its willingness, and the trustees must agree by a 75% majority vote.

We will promote projects and events organised by Charities and Networks.

We will invite a number of Charities and Networks to any public events that we put on, and give them an opportunity to promote their work, eg by putting on a stand, speaking about their work, or raising funds.

Representatives of Charities and Networks may be invited to decision-making meetings of CTMK or meetings focussed on mission.

## 6. Observers

CTMKT will maintain a list of congregations who are classed as “Observers”. These are congregations who could be full members under this policy, but choose not to be.

Observers are included in communications and will be treated as members of CTMK with the one exception that they cannot vote when decisions are made.

In order to become an observer a written request should come from the leadership group of the congregation and will need to be agreed by the CTMKT Trustees.

## 7. Membership Covenant

**Churches Together in Milton Keynes**  
**Membership Covenant**

Congregation: .....

As a member of Churches Together in Milton Keynes, we will work with other Christian congregations in this area to:

- Show God's love to the Borough and City of Milton Keynes
- Support each other as followers of Christ

We pledge a gift of ..... each year to fund the work of Churches Together in Milton Keynes Trust for the next ..... year(s).

We will ensure that there is a named person for communication with Churches Together in Milton Keynes and other member churches.

This covenant will be reviewed in .....

Signed on behalf of .....

Date: .....